



# Promising Narratives, Trusted Voices, and Consumer Trends

PROMOTION

## Growing the market for Alaska kelp 2024



**Which narratives, trusted voices, and trends are most effective in building awareness and driving adoption of Alaska kelp among eaters and B2B stakeholders?**

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This deck is part of a broader suite of resources that supports the [Alaska Kelp Food Roadmap](#).

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# 1 Executive Summary



Building **Alaska Brand Power** is key to growing the market for Alaska kelp. **Key Tactics:**

## 1. Use Effective Narratives to Promote Wider Adoption

Leverage sensory and origin-based as core messages.

*Narrative example: "Kelp: Alaska's best-kept secret—crisp, savory, and straight from the pure Alaskan waters."*

**For eaters**, capitalize on key themes aligned with eaters' core needs: **U.S. grown, sustainability, versatility, and global cuisines.**

**For B2B stakeholders**, highlight **social sustainability**, including traditional foodways and ethical sourcing, alongside **health benefits** and **environmentally sustainable production**, to drive wider adoption.

## 2. Partner with Eaters' Trusted Voices to Increase Awareness

Engage with well-known and local culinarians, as well as food and nutrition experts, to overcome awareness barriers.

With 57% of consumers unaware of retail kelp brands and over 90% are unaware about Alaska kelp.<sup>1</sup> Engaging influential voices can drive adoption and increase brand visibility.

**B2B insights suggest that products developed in collaboration with trusted chefs have the highest acceptance**, reinforcing the value of partnerships with trusted culinary and food experts.




## 3. Tap into Consumer Trends Shaping Eaters' Behavior

Utilize key consumer trends shaping consumer behavior to align with market demands.

It includes **functional self-care, convenience, clean living, connection-seeking, glocal flavors, nostalgia, and eco-consciousness.**

## 2 Today's Kelp Brands Emphasize Health, Origins, Sensory, and Sustainability in Messaging

**Keywords** and claims used by kelp brands in the U.S.—not specific to Alaska brands—in their communication assets:

 Health	 Sustainability	 Origins	 Sensory
<p><b>Nutritional content</b>            High in vitamins and minerals            Nutrient-dense            Excellent source of iodine</p> <p><b>Specific nutritional benefits</b>            Anti-inflammatory            Brain health            Digestive health            Weight loss            Immune support</p> <p><b>Positive claims</b>            Vegan            Low carb            Low in calories            Fat-free</p>	<p>“The Planet's Most Sustainable Crop”            Planet-healing            Restore ocean health            Good-for-the planet            Regenerative            Reduces ocean acidification</p>	<p>From pristine, coastal waters            Ocean-farmed            Family-owned            Alaskan            Pacific Ocean</p>	<p>Umami            Briny            Earthy            Refreshing            Wholesome            Unique texture            Flavor enhancer</p>

### 3 Eaters are Most Interested in Alaska Origins and Flavor as Key Messages

Alaska origins and flavor are considered essential in any marketing message for Alaska kelp, as they align with key motivators for consuming Alaska kelp and Alaska kelp products.



Top driver for kelp consumption.  
**60% of Established Kelp Eaters consume kelp because it's tasty.**<sup>2</sup>

"I would definitely **highlight the taste** because I think that could be a, you know, question mark that people have."<sup>1</sup>

"I enjoy eating kelp **for its unique umami flavor.**"<sup>1</sup>



**Second driver in our primary ethnographic research.**<sup>1</sup> Highly associated with **sustainability** and **safety**, a key core need\* for eaters.<sup>2,3</sup>

"I feel like we **can all trust Alaska**. They're local. They're, conscious. I feel like, locally sourced is the best."<sup>1</sup>

"I'm just gonna emphasize it was from Alaska in those **pristine waters, very clean**, very delicious, and really just **good for the local ecology.**"<sup>1</sup>

! \*If you want to know more about core human needs: [click here](#).

<sup>1</sup>FCL DScout Mission "What's on Your Plate?" (N=60), 2024 | <sup>2</sup>FCL Validation Survey (N=246), 2024 | <sup>3</sup>Mintel - Sustainability Outlook: A Focus on Consumer Trends & Sustainability Strategies, 2024.

## 4 Understanding the Power of Narratives to Persuade Eaters

In the following slides, we'll present recommended themes that producers can draw inspiration from to build messaging that will drive positive narratives of Alaska kelp.

### What are narratives?

Narratives are stories that we **collectively convey** that contribute to **people's interpretations** of the world. They're one way in which beliefs, emotions, values, motivations, needs, and culture influence how people process information—and ultimately, how they behave. They can show up in **imagery, stories, and product and brand messaging.**

### Framing is a key technique for creating narratives

Framing is a technique where one can highlight certain aspects of a message while downplaying others, letting you **tailor a message to beliefs, values, and cultures**, to ultimately **influence perception and behavior.**

### Use framing to build narratives around Alaska oysters by combining base themes with specific themes

Through a combination of secondary market research and quantitative testing with two eater segments, we have identified the following themes that speak to **eaters' core needs\*** and help **overcome barriers** like texture, flavor, and safety.

### Base Themes

**1) Flavor and 2) Alaska Origins:** These are essential themes in any marketing message for Alaska kelp as they are key drivers for its consumption.

### Specific Themes

**1) Food Safety, 2) Sustainability, 3) Health, 4) Quality.** These are themes that can be mixed and matched with the base themes depending on the eaters' context.

### Example: Base Themes (Flavor + Alaska Origins) + Specific Theme (Versatility)

*Kelp is Alaska's best-kept secret—a refreshingly crisp and savory sea vegetable that is able to be enjoyed in nearly any dish, from an umami topping on rice bowls, to a crunchy addition on your favorite sandwich.*

! \*If you want to know more about core human needs: [click here.](#)

# 5 Key Narratives Increasing Adoption among Alaska Visitors

Base themes + Specific themes = Narrative

## Alaska origins

“best-kept secret of Alaska”

**[Core need: Control\*]**

## Flavor

“a refreshingly crisp and savory sea vegetable”

**[Core need: Control]**

## Versatility

Promotes the highest behavioral intent (intention to learn + intention to consume). Significantly enhances the perception of kelps’ flavor, pleasant texture, ease of preparation, and health

## Sustainability

Second top driver promoting intention to consume. Reinforce the sustainability perception and quality.

These are suggested narrative messages that speak to each theme.

***Kelp is Alaska's best-kept secret—a refreshingly crisp and savory sea vegetable that is...***

...able to be enjoyed in nearly any dish, from an umami topping on rice bowls, to a crunchy addition on your favorite sandwich. **[Core need: Control]**

...sustainably grown in pristine waters. **[Core need: Control]**

**Alaska Visitors have a higher intention to learn about and consume Alaska kelp compared to Established Kelp Eaters.** Their unfamiliarity with the ingredient, combined with their desire for exploration, drives the strongest interest.

! \*If you want to know more about core human needs: [click here](#).  
FCL Validation Survey (N=200), 2024.

# 6 Key Narratives Increasing Adoption among Established Kelp Eaters

Base themes



Specific themes



Narrative

These are suggested narrative messages that speak to each theme.

***Kelp is Alaska's best-kept secret—a refreshingly crisp and savory sea vegetable that is...***

## Alaska origins

“best-kept secret of Alaska”

**[Core need: Control\*]**

## Flavor

“a refreshingly crisp and savory sea vegetable”

**[Core need: Control]**

## Sustainability

Enhances the perception of kelp quality. Makes it seem easier to cook.

...sustainably grown in pristine waters. **[Core need: Control]**

## U.S. grown

Enhances the perception of kelp being safer.

... proudly grown on American coastlines. **[Core need: Control]**

## Global cuisines

Perform best in improving health and flavor perception.

...your ticket to exploring a world of flavors—from Japanese-inspired wakame salad to Mexican-inspired salsas. **[Core need: Community]**

## Versatility

Promotes the highest purchase intent among all the narratives.

...able to be enjoyed in nearly any dish, from an umami topping on rice bowls, to a crunchy addition on your favorite sandwich. **[Core need: Control]**

! \*If you want to know more about core human needs: [click here](#).  
FCL Validation Survey (N=246), 2024

# 7 Sustainability as a Key Message for Foodservice eaters: Insights from Datassential

## What:

We conducted a **narrative test** in partnership with Datassential to identify which narratives about Alaska kelp resonate most with general consumers in foodservice. While our **identified segments prefer CPG as the primary channel, this test could provide valuable insights** for when Alaska kelp expands into foodservice settings.

## Results:

We hypothesize that **the sustainability narrative performed the best because**, similar to our validation survey findings, the description of **kelp as 'an ingredient that is sustainably grown' increases the perception of quality** which satisfies people's core needs of **safety and control**.

**In general, the dish we tested, Alaska Wakame Salad,\* was perceived as exceptionally unique.**

*\*Note: Alaska Wakame Salad was used as the base concept because it aligned with key themes in our research and was frequently mentioned as a popular and familiar choice among our Established Kelp Eaters.*

Theme	Narratives	TOTAL SCORE* <i>(relative to 100)</i>
Global cuisines	This dish is your ticket to exploring a world of bold and adventurous, global flavors.	22
U.S. grown	Savor this sea vegetable proudly grown in American coastlines.	22
Nutrition	Try this nutritional powerhouse, rich in fiber, minerals, and antioxidants, to support your overall wellbeing.	18
Versatility	Try this sea vegetable on its own or as a side to nearly any dish, from rice bowls to salads to sandwiches.	22
Sustainability	Savor an ingredient that is sustainably grown while supporting local communities.	25

**\*Total score** is a single number that assesses overall performance across all key metrics (unbranded purchase intent, consumption frequency, uniqueness, and appeal).

**N=1652** - General consumers (approx. 330 participants/theme)

# 8 Key Narratives Driving Adoption in Health-Oriented and Alaska Seafood Restaurants in the Lower 48

**Flavor and Alaska Origins remain essential messages for chefs to incorporate Alaska kelp on their menus**, as they align with consumer preferences. In foodservice channels, adoption can be further strengthened by leveraging social sustainability narratives that highlight the ingredient's cultural heritage, as well as showcasing stories from producers and their ethical practices.

## Flavor

**Chefs are eager to explore Alaska kelp's unique flavor, but if taste does not meet their expectations, they are not going to buy it.**

*"I think flavor would be a massive one, like would it fit in with our other menu items? Would it fit in well in a salad warm bowl?" - Supply Chain and Sustainability Manager at a popular health-oriented restaurant in the Lower 48*

## Alaska Origins

**The pristine, wild reputation of Alaska strengthens perceptions of quality, safety, and trustworthiness.**

*"Keep the upscale marketing brand going where they trust the product, know it's not coming from China, or a warm ocean. Just that pristine water and quality." - Supply Chain and Sustainability Manager at a popular health-oriented restaurant in the Lower 48*

## Cultural Heritage & Traditional Foodways

**Foodservice buyers are drawn to the story of Alaska kelp's connection to Indigenous knowledge and traditional foodways.**

*"I know that my own audience is fascinated with the the cultural story behind it." - Executive Chef at a luxury resort in Alaska*  
*"Share what's rare, what's specific, what's unique about the foodways of Alaska people is what makes good chefs in Alaska special." - Executive Chef at a tourist-facing casual seafood restaurant in Alaska*

## Ethical Sourcing

**Sharing stories about producers, their ethical practices, and the care behind the product enhances perceived value.**

*"Pushing that Alaska farmers are doing this and that this isn't coming from overseas." - Executive Chef at a luxury resort in Alaska*



# 9 Key Narratives Driving Adoption in Premium CPG Condiments, Snacks, and Large Supermarket Distributors in the Lower 48

**Flavor and Alaska origins remain key messages in the CPG space to persuade decision-makers to adopt Alaska kelp**, similar to consumer and foodservice audiences. Additionally, **health** benefits and **sustainable** sourcing further resonate with CPG stakeholders.

## Flavor

**The distinct flavor profile of Alaska kelp, especially unique species like bull kelp, provides an opportunity for differentiation in CPG products.**

*"If you could showcase a higher quality visual or flavor profile, for example, if Alaskan bull kelp tasted better than other types of kelp—and considering you can't find bull kelp elsewhere—that would be a major selling point." - Sustainability Business Developer at a multinational condiments CPG company*

## Alaska Origins

**The established reputation of Alaska's quality and safety provides a compelling story for CPG brands to leverage, particularly attractive to brand owners.**

*"If I'm sourcing help from Alaska, I would expect it to have, you know, better food safety attributes, lower heavy metal contamination risk" - Sustainability Business Developer at a multinational condiments CPG company*

## Cultural Heritage & Traditional Foodways

**Emphasizing kelp's health benefits is highly relevant for CPG brand owners as it aligns with its consumer preferences and current market trends.**

*"Health benefits specifically of mariculture seafood products are especially relevant for our buyers." - Principal Quality Standards Advisor, Seafood, at a large distributor*

## Ethical Sourcing

**Highlighting Alaska kelp's sustainable production, ethical sourcing, and support for U.S. farmers resonates with stakeholders aiming to meet consumer demand and environmental standards.**

*"The key benefit for the company decision-makers is understanding how sourcing Alaska kelp is cheaper and has a lower environmental impact than Asian imports." - Sustainability Business Developer at a multinational condiments CPG company*

# 10 Building Awareness through Trusted Voices

When asked who they would trust to deliver a message about kelp, both **Alaska Visitors** and **Established Kelp Eaters** said they would listen to **chefs and health professionals**. This was further supported by B2B interviews, which revealed that CPG products created in collaboration with chefs received the highest levels of acceptance and trust.

## #1: CELEBRITY/PRO CHEFS

Alaska Visitors (32%) | Established Kelp Eaters (25%)



**@gordongram**  
**(Gordon Ramsay)**  
*Hell's Kitchen (TV)*  
*MasterChef (TV)*  
**18M followers (IG)**



**@kenjilopezalt**  
**(J. Kenji López-Alt)**  
*The Food Lab*  
*NYT Cooking*  
**700K followers (IG)**



**@ohmage\_chefkaylah**  
**(Kaylah Thomas)**  
*Oh'mage*  
*Alaska Seafood*  
*Culinary Alliance*  
**1.3K followers (IG)**

Kelp eaters place high trust in chefs, particularly **celebrity and professional chefs, professional chefs, and chefs specializing in seafood and East Asian cuisine.**

*"What we've found is that the products we create through collaborative partnerships with chefs—where we build recipes together—really stand out and shine."*  
**-Co-founder, seaweed CPG company**

## #2: DIETITIANS/NUTRITIONISTS

Alaska Visitors (21%) | Established Kelp Eaters (30%)



**@nutritionbykylie**  
**(Kylie Sakaida, MS, RD)**  
*So Easy So Good*  
*Within Nutrition*  
**1.6M followers (IG)**



**@marypurdyrn**  
**(Mary Purdy, MSc, RD)**  
*The Nutrition Show*  
**2.4K followers (IG)**

Eaters generally perceive dietitians/ nutritionists as **food experts**, and would trust those who are **knowledgeable about the health benefits and nutritional value** of foods like kelp.

Trusted voices are especially **effective in in-store demos, providing reliable, trustworthy information** about kelp—a best practice highlighted in feedback from B2B stakeholders.

! **Note: IG = instagram**

FCL Validation Survey (N=446), 2024 | FCL Task 4 B2B Stakeholder Interviews (N=14), 2024.

# 11 Key Eater Trends That Drive Market Demand for Alaska Kelp

Our trends analysis is organized around **the 3 core human needs\***: **control, community, and purpose.**

**Why?** Understanding **what drives people** helps us better **predict** and **interpret changes** in **food culture** and **consumer behavior.**

CONTROL	COMMUNITY	PURPOSE
<p><b>1-Functional self-care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-care movement</li> <li>• Food as medicine</li> <li>• Functional foods</li> <li>• Holistic health</li> </ul> <p><b>2-Convenience</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All day snacking and better-for-you</li> <li>• Snacks</li> <li>• On-the-go</li> <li>• Anything, anytime, anywhere</li> </ul> <p><b>3-Clean living</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethical practices</li> <li>• Minimally processed</li> <li>• Clean label</li> <li>• Positive claims</li> </ul>	<p><b>4-Seeking connections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human-as-premium</li> <li>• Sense of community</li> <li>• Embracing artisanal</li> </ul> <p><b>5-Glocal flavors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Third culture cuisines</li> <li>• Indigenous origins</li> <li>• Global flavors with local ingredients</li> </ul> <p><b>6-Nostalgia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comfort</li> <li>• Familiarity</li> <li>• Indulgence</li> </ul>	<p><b>7-Eco-consciousness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible sourcing</li> <li>• Biodiversity</li> <li>• Regenerative agriculture</li> <li>• Upcycling</li> <li>• Ethical trade</li> <li>• Minimally processed plant-based</li> </ul>

! \*If you want to know more about core human needs: [click here.](#)

Click [here](#) to explore our trends research in detail and how it can be applied to the Alaska kelp industry.

# 12 APPROACH

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How Food for Climate League (FCL) Developed the Promotion Strategy  
TRENDS RESEARCH

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## SOURCES

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**+49 Existing Kelp & Seaweed U.S. Brands**

**18 Datasets** (U.S. and State Census, Mintel, Datassential)

**22 Industry Reports & Articles** (e.g. ASMI, Mintel, FMI)

Find the full bibliography: [here](#)

## TREND ANALYSIS

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**Reviewed** **macro trends using a PESTEL framework,\* including cross-industry and food-specific trends** in secondary research. Data collected was recent (2022-2024), with the largest focus on U.S. consumers.

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**Analyzed** **the drivers behind each trend.** For example, the rise of food as medicine as a trend stems from the growing health crisis and a rapidly aging population.

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**Connected** **these trends to core human needs:** control, community, and purpose (based on Self-Determination Theory, a behavior change framework).

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**Evaluated** **the implications and opportunities for Alaska producers** in relation to each trend.

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**\*Note:** The PESTEL framework analyzes external factors influencing a business or market, focusing on Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal trends.

# 12 APPROACH

## How FCL Developed the Promotion Strategy NARRATIVES & TRUSTED VOICES

### SOURCES

#### +49 Existing Kelp & Seaweed U.S. Brands

18 Datasets ( U.S. and State Census, Mintel, Datassential)

22 Industry Reports & Articles (e.g. ASMI, Mintel, FMI)

899 Eaters

1644 General audience

14 interviews with B2B stakeholders (e.g., R&D chefs, including an Indigenous chef; CPG brands; large distributors; and food historians)

## NARRATIVES

### Analyzed

how existing brands are talking about their products on their social media platforms, websites, and marketing assets.

### Conducted

**narrative validation tests** with Established Kelp Eaters, exploratory segments, and general audiences in foodservice.

#### A. Narrative validation with eaters (N=899)

- We tested the following five prioritized themes using an **implicit testing approach**: sustainability, versatility, global cuisine, and U.S. grown.

#### B. Narrative validation with general audience in foodservice | Datassential (N=1644)

- In collaboration with Datassential, we tested five key themes using Alaska Wakame Salad as our base concept, with the narratives adjusted to reflect how they could be presented on menus. Eaters then rated each narrative on a scale of 1 to 5 for unbranded purchase intent, consumption frequency, uniqueness, and appeal.

#### C. Narrative validation with prioritized B2B stakeholders in CPG and foodservice (N=14)

Through semi-structured interviews with key B2B stakeholders, we further tested these themes' potential to drive adoption among prioritized B2B segments.

# 12 APPROACH

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## How FCL Developed the Promotion Strategy NARRATIVES & TRUSTED VOICES

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### SOURCES

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**+49 Existing Kelp & Seaweed U.S. Brands**

**18 Datasets** ( U.S. and State Census, Mintel, Datassential)

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(e.g. ASMI, Mintel, FMI)

**899 Eaters**

**1644 General audience**

Find the full bibliography: [here](#)

## TRUSTED VOICES

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**Conducted** primary research to identify key influencers shaping eaters' food choices.

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**Researched** influencers aligned with AMC's philosophy, drawing from FCL's needfinding and validation survey responses.

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**Prioritized** those making a positive impact through food, with connections to aquatic or sustainable foods. Given the prevalence of celebrity chefs in responses, we prioritized niche, approachable influencers who better aligned with project values. The goal was to find trusted voices who could effectively promote Alaska kelp to our target audience.

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# THANK YOU!

Questions? Please contact us at:  
info@foodforclimateleague.org

Visit the [Southeast Conference website](#) to access the Roadmap Resources Hub